

all of that. And we know that as a result of this bill, we end up with a 17 percent premium increase.

So the vote was taken in the middle of the night when people were not paying attention. Members of Congress had their arms twisted and were made promises, with one Member of Congress reporting an attempted bribe, and we also know that come March, after this bill passed, that even though the drug benefit does not start until 2006, we find out that starting in March, the Federal Government and seniors whose premiums have gone up begin to pay a monthly payment to the Medicare HMOs.

In March 2004, Medicare HMOs were paid \$229 billion by taxpayers. In April of 2004, the Medicare HMOs were paid by taxpayers and Medicare beneficiaries through a premium increase of \$229 billion. In May, June, July, August, and September, every single month, taxpayers and Medicare beneficiaries have paid HMOs \$229 billion. Next month, November, December, and all of next year, the government and seniors will pay \$229 billion to the Medicare HMOs, and the drug benefit does not start until 2006.

There are 22 months of direct payments from seniors through an increased premium, and taxpayers, to the tune of billions of dollars, 22 months of \$229 billion a month payments to the insurance industry, insurance company HMOs, from seniors and taxpayers, even though the drug benefit does not start until 2006.

Mr. Speaker, you can see the perfect circle here. You can see that the bill was written by the drug and insurance industry with the President and the Vice President and Republican leaders. The drug and insurance industry get huge subsidies, much bigger profits, direct subsidies, with seniors paying a 17.4 percent premium increase, and taxpayers paying billions of dollars in order to pay off the insurance industry and the drug industry. And the completed circle ends this way: with the President and Republican leaders of this Congress getting tens of millions of dollars in campaign contributions from the drug and insurance industry.

It is corrupt, it is shameful, and it is morally reprehensible.

#### ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. MILLER of Michigan). The gentleman will refrain from improper references to the President and Vice President.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. What was that, Madam Speaker?

Madam Speaker, I do not understand. I did not say the President. What did I say that was improper?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Improper references to the President and Vice President, whether by accusation or innuendo are not in order.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Madam Speaker, I only said that the President and

Vice President sat down with the drug and insurance industry and wrote this bill, and I never said the President did anything illegal. I questioned that it was the right thing to do. Am I not allowed to say that, Madam Speaker?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman may not, even by innuendo, allege a quid pro quo between receipt of campaign contributions and public-policy decisions.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Madam Speaker, I really just want to make sure I understand. So if the President wrote a bill with the drug and insurance industry, then by my saying that the drug and insurance industry gave money to the President's campaign, that is improper to say?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman's characterization of the process as corrupt conveyed the impression of undue influence.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Madam Speaker, I was talking about the leadership of this Congress being corrupt by passing a Medicare bill the way they did.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York (Mr. HINCHEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. HINCHEY addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. CONYERS addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

#### THE THREE Rs

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. McDERMOTT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. McDERMOTT. Madam Speaker, the three Rs used to stand for reading, writing and arithmetic. Now the three Rs stand for Republican rhetoric is not reality. Here is the proof.

Under this administration, Bermuda has become corporate America's favorite destination. And I am not talking about vacations. The Tax Code encourages and rewards U.S. companies to set up storefronts offshore to exploit their profits, with \$75 billion last year alone, and avoid U.S. taxes.

And if the administration has its way, it will get even worse. The armored trucks, loaded with U.S. corporate profits, will be lining up at the docks waiting to transfer the money out of our country. It is made to work that way. Policies by the administration and approved by the Republican House are costing the American people between \$10 billion and \$20 billion a year in exported tax revenue, money that should go for health care, education, senior citizens, and worker re-

training. The need is there but the revenue is somewhere else.

U.S. companies deserve to make a profit, but America deserves to have everyone pay their fair share to support the country that gave them the opportunity to make those profits. Indeed, the administration has put corporate interests ahead of America's interests. It is a double-edged sword and both sides are hurting the American people.

More corporate profits are being shifted offshore and more corporate expenses are being shifted on to the workers. Over the last 4 years, health care premiums paid by American workers have risen three times faster than the average earnings. Today, over 14 million Americans spend at least 25 percent of their earnings on health care costs.

And let me clarify something, Madam Speaker, before the Republican rhetoric kicks in. Those 14 million Americans, spending at least 25 percent of their earnings on health care, all of them are under the age of 65. It is the middle class, in other words, that is being struck under the burden of administration policies that put corporate interests ahead of America's interests.

Over the last 4 years, health care premiums in 26 States have risen more than 40 percent. What did the administration do in response? Reward the drug companies with more profits and renege on a promise to senior citizens. Americans today, old and young alike, are paying more and earning less. And Americans are going to be paying a lot more in the coming years.

When the administration exported the U.S. Treasury into the bank accounts of the rich, America was left holding an IOU that is a black hole on America's future. There is no way to see in it, through it, or out of it. Fully one-half of that massive deficit this year alone is a direct result of the administration's fiscal binge. They have created a mountain of debt and a mole hill of economic progress.

Despite the Republican rhetoric, the administration is short at least 100,000 jobs per month. Per month. Despite the Republican rhetoric, the American people know that. Consumer confidence was down again last month because people are not buying the administration's rhetoric. The number of consumers saying jobs are hard to come by went up. Consumers drive the U.S. economy. They are worried, and with good reason. The number of people living in poverty is up. The number of people without health care coverage is up. The number of people who have exhausted long-term employment benefits is dramatically up.

And then, Madam Speaker, there is Iraq. Escalating casualties, chaos, and crisis lead the President to conclude things are getting better. That must explain why over one-third of former soldiers called up this month and ordered to report for active duty in Iraq have not shown up.